**Minority Business Initiative Advisory Board**

***March Meeting Minutes***

**Thursday, March 17, 2022**

1:00 PM – 2:30 PM

Remotely Held by Teams Meeting Software

Hartford CT, Connecticut

**Attendance**

* Board Members Present: Howard Hill, Leticia Colon de Mejias; David Lehman, Avery Gaddis, Pedro Soto, Roberta Hoskie, Doug McCrory and George Mathanool
* Members Absent:
* Quorum: Yes
* DECD Staff Present: Alvetta Spencer, Sheila Hummel, Deputy Commissioner Paul Robertson, George Norfleet and Ed Bona

**Welcome and Introductions:**

 Commissioner David Lehman welcomed the group and opened the meeting at 1:05

**MBI Hiring Update: George Norfleet.**

* There were 72 applicants for the MBI Managerial post.
* 4 applicants were granted interviews
* 1 applicant scored high enough to be invited back for a second interview on March 22, 2022
* The interviews for the second MBI position have started, the second position will be a step below the Managerial post.
* For the 2nd position:
* 14 applied and 7 interviewed.
* An offer will be made to the successful applicant in the next two weeks.

Laticia: What is the plan, will the new manger work on the MBI Strategic Plan?

David: The new manager is going to work with the Board to drive the Strategic Plan.

**Minutes:**

David passed a motion to approve February minutes and minutes were approved.

 **HEDCO Update:** - Sheila Hummel

* **Use $3M from the balance of the MBRLF – Forgivable Loans**
* **Restart - Certification Program** – Society of Human Engagement and Business Alignment (SHEBA) Assessing Small Business needs with regards to business strategies, financial growth and projections, IT Infrastructure, training and mentorship; before the funding.
* **Goal of Program** – Working with SHEBA to develop and outline solid and sustainable practices for businesses to ultimately received financial assistance from HEDCO.
* **SAMA –** Working with Businesses pre and post funding. Assisting with the application process.
* **Outreach –** HEDCO’s Website, Current Portfolio businesses, Statewide Partners and DECD
* This type of Critical Service and Support is much needed to reshape and rebuild businesses throughout the State of CT.

Continued discussion about HEDCO Update:

**Sen. McCrory:**  This is a good opportunity in that businesses with be assessed and receive technical assistance prior to receiving the funding.

**Laticia:** wanted to know more about the certification process and if that will also include startups and new businesses in addition to matrices showing number of applicants, how many approved and reasons for denial.

**Sheila:** Will prepare an application process flow chart for the board members.

**The Minority and Community Committee Update and Discussion:**

**David:** This is a discussion on how to get feedback from the board on what’s the right structure and form of organization for the MBI moving forward.

**Paul**: Presented a chart outlining the various steps in the process of creating an entity.

**Sen. McCrory:** We need to determine the initial funding before we focus on the entity and structure.

**David:** We need to have a clear Mission Statement/Plan to receive the funding. It can be funded through CIF or other sources.

**Laticia:** Other organizations have been funded without clear mission statements, however, how about something like: “Working to Advance the Economic Development in Disadvantaged and Historically Marginalized Communities.”

**Pedro:** Even if I feel like we don’t need to justify ourselves, we should do it to demonstrate our capability until such a time when MBI is independent.

**David:** There are 2 possible scenarios moving froward: remaining part of DECD or becoming a separate non-profit.

Another question to consider, should MBI focus just on economic development or consider a larger role in the minority communities.

**Howard:** Wanted to know if MBI becomes a non-profit can it receive funds through DECD.

**David:** There are examples such as: Social Equity Council and Connecticut Center for Advanced Technology (CCAT)

**George M**: In the interest of time, we should use the existing legislation as a mandate for creating a non-profit entity and the goals and objectives can be amended and expanded upon in the future.

**Avery:** We should be methodical and strategic in the formation of this entity.

**Financial Report**

Sheila Hummel presented the MBI Financial Report. The report was accepted.

**Other Business:**

**Laticia:** Could some of the existing funds be used to explore the formation of a non-profit entity?

**David:** That would and acceptable use of the funds.

**Adjourn:**

David asked for a motion to adjourn the meeting. Motion passed and meeting was adjourned at 2:32PM.